FALL 2022

Rocket Report

ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS
DISTRICT NEWSLETTER









Upcoming events

Dec. 23 - Jan. 2 Winter Break

Check the school website for current announcements and activities

www.rockford.k12.mn.us







OUR MISSION

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.



State of the District
Superintendent, Rhonda Dean

The Rockford Area School District, along with school districts across the country, continue to re-engage after COVID. This State of the District is a high-level overview of the Rockford Area School District, post COVID.

Strategic Plan –Our Strategic Plan was adopted by the School Board in March 2021. It outlines our mission, vision, core values and strategic directions. Our strategic plan drives and prioritizes our daily work.



Enrollment –Prior to the pandemic, enrollment hovered at 1650 students. In the fall of 2020, we lost approximately 100 students. Current enrollment is 1578 students. We are still not at pre-pandemic enrollment levels, but we are trending in the right direction.

Demographics – We are a fairly homogenous population. Approximately 75% of our student population is white. Our largest population of students of color are our Hispanic/Latino students, at approximately 11-12%; after that, it's our African American students at 4%. Approximately 30% of students receive free/reduced lunch based on financial need or Direct Certification from the state.

Our Schools – The Rockford Area School District offers a magnet school experience for all K-12 students. Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School offers an arts-infused curriculum. Rockford Middle School - Center for Environmental Studies provides a unique learning experience through the environment. Rockford High School, our newest magnet, is an authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) World school. IB is a global curriculum that focuses on academic and personal rigor. Rockford High School offers a Middle Years program for students in grades 9 and 10; a Diploma Program for students in grades 11 and 12 and a Career-Related Program, also for students in grades 11-12. Visit www.IB.org for more information about the IB program.

learn.explore.create.imagine
REAMS
ROCKFORD ELEMENTARY ARTS MAGNET SCHOOL

STEM

INSPIRE.ACHIEVE.EXCEL
ROCKFORD HIGH SCHOOL



Academics – The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA), administered in Spring 2022, indicated over half of our students performed above the state average. FAST/STAR data which measures expected growth over the year, indicated a majority of our students grew at expected or higher rates.

Community Education – Our community education programs continue to grow. Last year, Rockford Community Education ran 344 youth and adult classes at the community center, and serviced over 260 students in our Galaxy child care program. Enrollment in preschool is at pre-pandemic levels with 117 students enrolled in our Launching Pad Preschool program.

Facilities Update – Safe Routes to School is a priority for Rockford Area Schools. Through the use of abatement bonds, we have repaired many sidewalks throughout the district. We replaced/repaired the parking lots at the Rockford Community Center, bus garage and REAMS; and we are creating two new bus corrals to improve safety during student pick up and drop off.



Technology – As a result of the pandemic, Rockford Area Schools is a 1:1 device district. That means that all students have access to a chromebook during the school day and at home when needed. We are investing in our technology infrastructure by replacing our servers, upgrading our firewalls, and getting fiber to our athletic fields. We are also improving our data privacy protocols to keep personal data secure.

Financial – We are a people-centric industry. Seventy percent of our general fund budget goes to salary and benefits and twenty-four percent goes to purchased services such as transportation and food services. Despite the decrease in enrollment, we have been able to balance our budget and maintain a healthy fund balance.



Safety and Security - The safety of staff and students is a top priority. We constantly review and refine our safety protocols with students and staff. Strong relationships are one of our greatest defenses against violence. We need to teach and model prosocial behavior; build trust and encourage students to say something if they see something. Help us keep our school safe.

Looking Ahead – Our enrollment is rebounding. We will continue focusing on maintaining a safe and welcoming school environment. We are strengthening our educational programs and assessing our future facility needs. More information about the State of the District may be found on our website.



Thank you, to the many parents and community members, for supporting our schools.

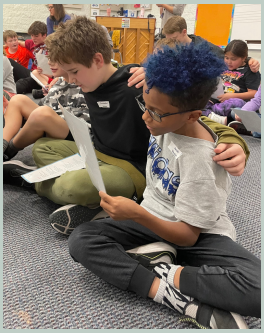
Rhonda Dean

REAMS
ROCKFORD ELEMENTARY ARTS MAGNET SCHOOL

Fourth Grade Staff and Students Participate in Annual Kindness Retreat

Again this year, Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School fourth grade students participated in a Kindness Retreat hosted by Youth Frontiers. The main goals and objectives for the students was to be kind, participate, and have fun. The students worked with three leaders from Youth Frontiers, and the Rockford High School LINK leaders, who were their small group facilitators throughout the day. It was a day of high energy, deep thinking, and looking for ways to work together to treat everyone they encounter in a positive, kind manner. Students were told that kindness is like a boomerang, you need to throw it out there for it to come back to you. They talked with the leaders about ways to promote kindness in large and small groups.







Students ended their day by filling out a card with their thoughts of how they were going to be kinder to teachers and classmates, who they wanted to thank, and who they may want to apologize to and why. Many students shared their thoughts with the group at the end of the day. The staff and students were very excited to share in this day-long, interactive retreat to promote kindness at Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School.

New Bus Loops







Unity Sculpture

Fourth grade Art Troupe students created a permanent collection sculpture piece showcasing the artistic foundations: pattern, unity, variety, contrast, and balance.

Students worked together on this piece and wanted a structure which expressed the unity of working with other classmates and as an entire school. In the end, the individual pieces were joined together in unity.



Steps of Kindness

The counselors at REAMS help ensure all students receive social-emotional lessons on topics such as: growth mindset, identifying emotions, regulating emotions, problem solving, organization skills, self-advocacy, and managing change. All grades utilize the Second Step curriculum, which is a series of research-based lessons proven to improve social-emotional and academic outcomes. During Second Step classroom lessons, students connect with the content, each other, and the teacher as they build new social-emotional skills using a variety of media, activities, and interactive components to help engage every learner and provide opportunities for culturally relevant teaching. With the aid of the school counselors, students learn to develop effective collaboration and cooperation skills, practice perseverance, learn self-motivation, utilize independent and self-directed habits, regulate their emotions, and more. Part of the mission of the counselors at REAMS is to provide all students with support during times of transition, heightened stress, or other situations that may impede a student's success.



REAMS is committed to an environment that supports and encourages kindness! This year the Kindness Council (nominated 3rd and 4th grade students) and the Smile Squad (nominated K, 1st, and 2nd grade students) worked hard to spread kindness throughout the building. In October, we celebrated Unity Day. The color for Unity Day is orange, and we asked every student to make a “Kindness Pledge” for themselves this year. Students used their creativity to draw and write their pledge on a piece of orange paper, and all of the pledges were strung together in our commons area to make a Unity Chain, as a reminder of our ability to unite as a school community to promote kindness together.

Each month the Kindness Council and Smile Squad will take on a new challenge and help students spread kindness in the school and in the community!



Random Act of Kindness

Three students at REAMS were recognized during a School Board meeting for their generosity and their unselfish act of kindness.

On an unseasonably hot afternoon in September, third graders Finn Webb and Eli Menard and fourth grader Jason Menard, braved the heat and their own exhaustion after a full day of school, to sell lemonade on the corner of Elm Street and Main Street in Rockford.

Strategically stationed on the busy corner, the boys announced their business and waved to all who drove by. Some people honked and continued on. However, many stopped for a cold glass of lemonade.



Selling lemonade on a corner is not unique to kids, but what the three entrepreneurs did with their profits was noteworthy. In just a few hours, the boys were able to raise more than $60.

They didn’t think they would raise that much money, so they were unsure of what to do with all of it. They discussed their ideas and decided to keep some of the money for themselves and to give half of the money to a local food shelf. With a clear plan in place, the boys delivered their donation to the food shelf just one block away.

RMS-CES

ROCKFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL - CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Paul Warzecha - Introduction

My name is Paul Warzecha, and I am thrilled to be the Principal at Rockford Middle School's Center for Environmental Studies STEM Magnet school. Prior to coming to Rockford, I served as a middle school educator for the last fifteen years, with the last eight years being the Assistant Principal at a STEM Magnet school. I was drawn to the position given my personal passion for environmental studies and my unique professional experiences in a similar role. At the start of the year, I met with each and every class and heard from students and staff their desire to have a kind school. This fall, my message to our school has been that each of us at school is responsible to make this school a kind place and that student leadership has been our momentum so far this school year. I am grateful for such great people that I get a chance to work alongside and serve, and look forward to all the amazing things we will accomplish together as a team.







ROCKFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL **Center for Environmental Studies**

Deep Portage/Osprey Wilds

This year marked the 25th year that RMS-CES 6th Graders packed their bags and headed north to Deep Portage Learning Center for two nights and three days of environmental education. The three-day Deep Portage experience is a time-honored tradition and an important STEM experience for middle school students. This trip is a phenomenal way to build community and immerse students in environmental education. The spirit of Deep Portage rings true for another group of RMS-CES 6th graders. Students challenged themselves on the 35 foot rock wall, used a dichotomous key to identify native Minnesota trees, honed their compass skills in the woods, and searched for macroinvertebrates in Bass Pond.





After their 6th Grade Deep Portage trip was canceled, we decided to explore new adventures with the 7th Graders at Osprey Wilds. The weather was beautiful, the trees were in full fall splendor, and spirits were high. The highlight of the trip for many was challenging themselves on the high ropes course. Many thanks to the teachers, parent volunteers, office staff, and administration who contributed to the success of the overnight expeditions.

discover RMS-CES



Community Gardens

Originally constructed as an Eagle Scout project by Rockford graduate, Carter DeWolfe, the RMS-CES bed gardens have been a cornerstone of the agriculture program for the past eight years. With the recent addition of the RMS-CES Greenhouse, Rockford Area Schools is looking to refresh and expand the gardens to work in conjunction with RAS Community Education to offer accessible garden space for Rockford area residents. Community input was solicited during the RAS Community Garden meetings. Working together with landscape architects, RAS buildings and grounds, and industrial technology departments, the beds will be constructed over winter with openings available for the Spring 2023 growing season.





Student Council

At Rockford Middle School, student leaders are constantly stepping up in many ways. In the middle of September, approximately 50 students applied for the Student Council by making a video and ten were chosen by their peers to represent their grade level student body on Student Council. So far, our four 8th grade leaders have taken initiative to lead the group in declaring Homecoming dress up days, planning Veteran's Day celebrations, and working on planning a middle school dance. These students have embodied leadership and kindness in their efforts and interactions. We can't wait to see all the amazing things they accomplish in the coming year.

Partnerships

For the past 11 years, RMS-CES students have been reconnected with nature while building knowledge and skills at Baker Outdoor Learning Center. Over time, the partnership has grown. Teachers and staff have helped develop curriculum, implemented new classes, skills, and opportunities for students. From 5th graders participating in a spirited game of predator/prey at Lake Rebecca to 8th graders collecting prairie seeds at Crow Hassen parks, RMS-CES students participate in eight diverse environmentally focused experiences over their RMS-CES career. In addition, our 7th Grade students explore the negative effects of bioaccumulation during their year-long study with the University of Minnesota Raptor Center.





WEB

WEB stands for "Where Everybody Belongs." That belief is at the core of Rockford Middle School, on the first day and beyond! WEB is a middle school orientation and transition program that welcomes 5th graders to our building and makes them feel comfortable during the first year of middle school. 8th grade WEB leaders are trained with activities to support students from the moment they arrive on campus on the first day. WEB leaders are role models and leaders who help 5th graders understand how to survive and thrive in middle school. Many of our WEB leaders report that they wanted to become a Leader due to their positive interactions and experiences with their WEB leader when they were in 5th grade! RMS-CES is proud of our 8th grade WEB leaders for stepping up to a challenge, providing support and guidance for 5th grade, and being positive role models in our building

RHS
ROCKFORD HIGH SCHOOL

FFA Convention

The Rockford Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter is in full-swing! To kick-start the year, the chapter has already conducted a couple of service projects and have had three teams qualify for state this April, including our high school's Dairy Cattle Evaluation team (3rd place regional team) and Livestock Evaluation team (2nd place) and our middle school Horse Evaluation team (1st place)! Each team developed a variety of skills in evaluating livestock on their physical or genetic properties and delivering oral reasons to justify their placings. This fall, the chapter will attend the National Convention trip and kickoff the annual fruit sale, along with a variety of other competitions. If you would like to connect with the FFA Chapter, reach out to Mr. Ramstad, at ramstadj@rockford.k12.mn.us.





Career Fair

On Friday, October 14, 2022 Rockford High School hosted a Career Fair for grades 9-12 during Rocket Block time. More than 40 vendors from multiple career paths, military, and 2 and 4 year colleges were on site to educate and answer questions students had about post high school job opportunities or education needed to pursue their chosen career path. One of the goals of the International Baccalaureate Career Pathway program is to expose students to opportunities for their post secondary education and careers.

Becca Morgan - District Nurse

Here we are- October, 2022- and I finally feel like my old self, like the nurse I was before COVID, the nurse I prefer to be. Not the nurse quarantining hundreds of students and enforcing masks or social distancing. Not the nurse who often felt like she maybe wasn't cut out for the job. I get to show up each day with one mission- to support and care for the students and staff of Rockford Area Schools. I guess technically I was doing that the last couple of years too, it just sure felt different.



Rockets

discover RHS



High School

Students and staff at Rockford High School have a great opportunity this year to realize our full potential and capitalize on things that will help us fulfill our mission and vision. Here are a few items we celebrated within the first few weeks of the year:

- Our inaugural class of IB Diploma Students will graduate this year
- We have a goal to increase leadership opportunities for students on at least four different committees
- Our LINK program, which supports, guides, and leads new students, celebrates its 15th year
- Students will play an important part in creating a culture of belonging through committee work and polling
- Teachers will identify relevant real-world connections to their curriculum to provide a greater depth of knowledge and practical application for our students
- Our school will help articulate the IB Learner Profile traits and how they are to be lived out in high school and beyond
- We will explore the addition of IB Career Program Pathways, which will drive our elective offerings and prepare future-ready students for the workforce
- Our Direct Admissions affiliation allows our students to learn about schools to which they are accepted prior to applying, which will remove barriers for all
- RHS hosted our first Career Fair this fall, giving students a first-hand look at a myriad of career options upon graduation
- Our partnership with Josten's will afford students the opportunity to learn and peer teach about character building, responsibility, and other valuable topics
- Our CleverTouch software (and corresponding training) exposes our students to the latest interactive technology, enhancing the teaching and learning experience and preparing students for presentations and professional collaboration at work







We are proud of our accomplishments, and we thank you for your support in our future success.

Diploma Programme | Career-related Programme | Middle Years Programme

#Rockets883

discover
COMMUNITY EDUCATION

2022-23 Launching Pad Preschool Registration

It's not too late! Do you have a child that was 3, 4 or 5-years-old by September 1, 2022 and is ready for an engaging, unique and fun -filled preschool experience? Launching Pad Preschool still has some openings for the 2022-23 school year. We offer half day options 2, 3 and 5 days a week, and full day options, 2 and 3 days a week. Children learn and play together in an atmosphere that is rich in opportunities to discover and explore. The caring and highly trained teachers and staff interact with the children, engaging them in conversations about their work and encouraging them to reach beyond their current abilities. The entire program is designed to be engaging and fun so children don't just learn, they love to learn!

On-line registration and information are available at www.rockford.ce.eleyo.com. You may also visit our website at: www.rockford.k12.mn.us. Under the Community tab, click Early Childhood Programs. For more information, please call us at 763-477-7500.

Early Childhood Screening

Identifying possible concerns early is the best way to prevent serious problems later in young children. Minnesota state law requires all children to participate in **Early Childhood Health & Development Screening** before they may enter public kindergarten. The ideal time to screen children is at age 3 to 4. Early Childhood Screening also provides an opportunity for parents to discuss questions and concerns, and find out about resources in the school and community. **Make your appointment by calling the Early Childhood Programs Office at 763-477-7500.**

Building a Community for Life-Long Learning
Rockford Area Schools
COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Galaxy Kids

Galaxy Kids held their annual MEA non-school days for families within the program that needed care on October 19-21. Throughout each day, students were able to participate in many fun filled activities that were tied to a Halloween/Fall Theme. Kids also enjoyed the fall weather, and went outside and played on the playgrounds/outdoor spaces around the school. These exciting activities included:

- A Scavenger Hunt
- Thumb print ghost paintings
- Spider making with play dough
- Mummy making with tape
- Halloween Bingo
- Skeleton making with Q-tips
- Feed the monster
- Color matching on a web
- Moon Sand
- Pumpkin Exploration and Carving





Galaxy Kids is a certified before and after school child care program for preschool-6th grade students offered through Rockford Area Schools Community Education. Galaxy is conveniently located in Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School right across the hall from the ECFE and the Preschool classrooms. The program is open Monday-Friday from 6 a.m.to 6 p.m, to assist with family child care needs. There are many different registration options sure to accommodate most busy schedules. If you are looking for child care, before, during, or after school, then this may be the program for you.

For more information contact us at: Call 763-477-7555 Email hallahanc@rockford.k12.mn.us

discover ACTIVITIES

All About Activities

Every year, the fall season flies by just as quickly as the leaves change color. Fall activities begin weeks before the start of the school year. Rockford Area Schools had a great turnout of students again this fall.



Cheerleading
Grades 7-12
11 Participants



Boys Soccer
Grades 7-12
30 Participants

Cross Country
Grades 7-12
29 Participants



Football
Grades 9-12
73 Participants

Football
Grades 7-8
38 Participants





Girls Soccer
Grades 7-12
37 Participants



Marching Band
Grades 7-12
58 Participants

Volleyball
Grades 9-12
33 Participants

Volleyball
Grades 7-8
27 Participants



Girls Tennis
Grades 7-12
24 Participants



Independent School District 883
ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS
6051 Ash Street
Rockford, MN 55373

PRSTD STD
Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Postal Patron ECRWSS
Madelia MN
Permit No.4

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

FB.com/isd883

@isd883

@isd883

Rockford Area Schools MN